

overall quality of this great piece of scholarship. Ngom's effort has convincingly demonstrated that the consideration of Euro-Arab sources on African subjects as primary and the local, oral, intangible, including 'ajamī sources as secondary (when not dismissed altogether) is no longer tenable and has become intellectually and realistically incorrect. He has shown that insights afforded by the 'secondary' sources have given more authentic voices to topoi and narratives in which Africans are the *dramatis personae*, the active participants and observers. His effort will certainly open up new vistas on other African movements and subjects. But could Wolof 'ajamī have influenced Yoruba language (Nigeria)? In Murid 'ajamī discourse, 'njàngum téere' means 'book-based education' (p. 75). The Yoruba word for book or a written stuff is *tira*. This may be an issue for a future investigation in trans-West African linguistic borrowing.⁷ The Companion website (www.oup.com/us/muslimsbeyondthearabworld) which puts at our disposal the recorded audio recitations, chantings, and cantilations of Murīd 'ajamī verses gives an added value. Ngom has brilliantly shown that the 'ajamī genre is an effective, if not the most comprehensively effective, medium for analysing the life voyage of Ahmadu Bamba as the *spirit auctores* of the Murīdiyya, both as a social mass movement and a mystical order. Africanists, and indeed all students and scholars of Islam in Africa will for long remain beholden to this effort. No academic platform which holds authentic African voice in high esteem should be without it. Its eloquent testimony to the unique and ground-breaking quality is recognized in the 2017 prestigious Herskovits Prize for the most important scholarly work in African studies published in English during 2016.

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⁷ Cf. Amidu Sanni review of Charles Stewart (ed.) 'Arabic Literature of Africa, Volume 5. The Writings of Mauritania and the Western Sahara, Parts 1 and 2', *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 28/1 (2017): 103–6.

Circuits of Faith: Migration, Education, and the Wahhabi Mission

By MICHAEL FARQUHAR (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2017. Stanford Studies in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies), xiii + 269 pp. Price HB £39.00. EAN 978–0804798358.

Only a few days after the events of 11 September 2001, I distinctly remember a man explaining on CNN that the deeper problem behind the attacks—in which fifteen Saudis were involved out of a total of nineteen hijackers—was not so much Islam, but Wahhabism, the ideology that supposedly inspired the terrorists. Similar accusations have been expressed many times since then, with a seemingly increasing number of people believing there to be a clear link between Saudi

Arabia and Wahhabism or Salafism, on the one hand, and radicalization and terrorism, on the other. While many scholars of Islam have pointed out that the relation between these is not as clearcut as some think, it has always been difficult to put one's finger on exactly how Wahhabism 'travels' from Saudi Arabia to other places. Michael Farquhar, in his excellent book *Circuits of Faith*, goes a long way toward explaining these and many other issues.

In the introduction, Farquhar wonders: 'What exactly is the "export version of Wahhabism" that is supposedly at work here and what is its relationship with the diverse strands of Salafi religiosity that have proliferated around the world in recent decades?' (p. 2) Taking the Islamic University of Medina (IUM) as his focal point, Farquhar points out that 'Wahhabi expansion, as reflected in the history of the IUM, is better thought of as a series of unequal transactions occurring within the terms of a transnational religious economy. The latter is understood here as consisting in the circulation—both within and across borders—of religious migrants, social technologies, and material and symbolic forms of capital' (pp. 4–5). The latter term is explained by Farquhar by pointing out that Saudi Arabia's material capital poured into the IUM results in 'particular forms of spiritual capital possessed by the students', like 'knowledge, skills and qualifications' (p. 16).

On the basis of these insights, the author goes on to deal with education in Saudi Arabia and its attraction to Muslims from across the globe in seven chapters. The first focuses on education in the Ottoman-ruled Hijaz. Farquhar shows how mosques, religious schools (madrasas) and Sufi lodges were used as places of learning by a fairly international group of people who visited or lived in the Arabian Peninsula. He also points out that, from the 1870s onward, the Ottomans increasingly bureaucratized the education system of the Hijaz, leading to—for example—annual exams taken by all students rather than certificates of permission to teach a certain book (*ijāzas*) given by individual scholars to individual students. It was this bureaucratized system of education that the current Saudi state inherited from the Ottomans.

In ch. 2, Farquhar shows how the Saudi-Wahhabi take-over of the Arabian Peninsula—and especially the western Hijaz region—influenced the country's education system. The author shows that the Wahhabi religious establishment in the central-Arabian Najd region took over the country (sometimes forcefully) by demolishing shrines, prohibiting things like tobacco and limiting Sufi activities. While this clashed with existing norms, the Wahhabis did so on the basis of the education system put in place by the Ottomans. As such, the Directorate of Education set up by Saudi Arabia—and eventually replaced by the Saudi Ministry of Education in 1953—was both a break with and a continuation of the past. This was expressed most clearly in the Saudi Scholastic Institute, which offered 'secondary-level instruction to an all-male student body in both religious and secular subjects' and was founded in Makka in 1926 or 1927 (p. 50).

The IUM, which was founded in 1961, replaced the Saudi Scholastic Institute and constitutes the subject of chs. 3–7. The author is careful to note that the IUM was more than a mere educational institute, however. He points to the internal political reasons the Saudi regime had to set up an Islamic university to shore up

its own credentials among the Wahhabi religious scholars, on the one hand, and to counter the socialist, republican propaganda coming from Egypt under President Gamāl ‘Abd al-Nāṣir (r. 1954-1970), on the other. ‘The hope,’ Farquhar writes, ‘was that such an institution might compete with al-Azhar as a center of religious learning [...] to counter “Egyptian nationalism, in its present expansionist state” ’ (p. 72). It is therefore not surprising that the IUM has remained in control of Wahhabi scholars loyal to the Saudi state from the start.

Chapter 4 deals with how the IUM, by hiring personnel, attracting students, asking scholars to sit on its advisory council and establishing contacts with other Arab and Muslim countries, forged a transnational community. Although this provided the IUM with accessibility to students who were not necessarily comfortable with Wahhabism and more at ease with scholars from different Muslim backgrounds, foreign staff also led to problems, as perceived by Saudi authorities, such as the supposedly Muslim Brotherhood-inspired political dissent in the early 1990s. As the author points out, this dissent may well have contributed to the Saudi effort to domesticate the IUM, meaning that virtually all staff at the university were Saudi nationals at the end of the 1990s.

The fifth and sixth chapters treat what the IUM actually teaches its students and how this has changed. Chapter 6 is particularly interesting since it not only deals with the subjects taught at the IUM, it also specifically mentions the books used during classes. While ideology and theology are not central to the book, Farquhar generally deals with these very well and answers questions that he could easily have left to others but nevertheless decided to tackle. One of these concerns the frequent use of Abū Jā‘far al-Ṭahāwī’s *al-‘Aqīda al-Ṭahāwiyya*. Given al-Ṭahāwī’s Hanafi background, it is not immediately clear why this text is used so often among Salafis, including at the IUM, but Farquhar explains this admirably. Although the author is less certain about another one of these issues—the shift from the tendency among Wahhabis to practice blind emulation (*taqlīd*) of the Hanbali school of Islamic law to their direct interpretation of the sources (*ijtihād*), as noticed by Frank Vogel, Stéphane Lacroix and others—his speculation about this is informed and quite interesting.

The final chapter of the book deals with the IUM’s legacy among its students once they have left the university. Farquhar shows that while the education enjoyed in Madina certainly had an impact on people’s lives, this does not translate into uniform lifestyles and ideas after their stay at the university. The author shows that some, including Jihadi-Salafis, have been quite critical of the IUM, while others have become disillusioned with the university or with Salafism altogether. The diverse ways in which alumni deal with what they were taught at IUM shows that Saudi-Wahhabi influence is far more nuanced than merely ‘expanding’ or ‘exporting’ Wahhabism abroad. Farquhar rightly points out that ‘Saudi state actors have been able to exert influence within the territories of other states around the world; but that influence has not necessarily constituted control’ (p. 193).

Michael Farquhar has done an excellent job researching and writing this book. Its highly diverse sources—ranging from university curricula and information about salaries to books about theology—make this a great contribution to the

literature on Saudi Arabia. It fills a gap in our understanding of the dissemination of Wahhabism and nicely complements the great work already done by scholars such as Madawi al-Rasheed. As mentioned, it also provides empirical detail and nuance to the debate on Saudi influence abroad that keeps rearing its head. Although the book contains minor mistakes—such as the references to the theological views of the Murji'a (pp. 135, 177)—this is clearly a great publication that deserves to be read widely.

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Salafism After the Arab Awakening: Contending with People's Power

Edited by FRANCESCO CAVATORTA and FABIO MERONE (London: Hurst & Company, 2016), xiv + 354 pp. Price HB £30.00. EAN 978–1849044868.

This important collection, which brings together some of the most prominent and insightful researchers in the field, explores how representatives of various strands of Salafism have sought to deal with the forces unleashed during and after the Arab uprisings. The contributors show that, while the uprisings had little to do with religion in the first instance, one of their unintended consequences has been a remarkable set of transformations in the discourse, action, and social and political positioning of Salafi actors across the Middle East. Drawing on fieldwork in locations from Morocco to Kuwait, they trace new debates between scholars, activists and publics, shifts within existing movements and realignments in their relations with each other, and most importantly an effusion of newly politicized Salafi currents across the region.

The most famous example of these novel political actors is the al-Nour Party in Egypt, which emerged out of historically quietist circles in Alexandria in the wake of the 2011 uprising and within months was able to ally with other new Salafi parties to secure 25 per cent of the vote in that year's parliamentary elections. While the story of al-Nour is told here by Khalil al-Anani, other contributors—in studies mostly arranged country by country—trace less well known but nonetheless very significant shifts elsewhere. Standout chapters include one by Zoltan Pall, who shows how debates about the legitimacy of public protest and revolution led to the increasing fragmentation of the Salafi scene in Kuwait; an account by Joas Wagemakers of how Salafis in Jordan have been polarized, as the country's Jam'iyyat al-Kitab wa-l-Sunna movement cheered on new Salafi parties abroad and in doing so spurred renewed resistance to politicization from their quietist Salafi compatriots; and Stéphane Lacroix's narration of unusual alliances between Sahwa figureheads, 'Islamoliberals' and Shi'i activists in Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, Thomas Pierret offers an impressive